

California's Hazard Communication Regulation requires all California employers to provide information to their employees about the hazardous substances to which they may be exposed during the course of performing their work. This information is required to be done by means of a *hazard communication program* which is to include, among other things, labels and other forms of warning, material data safety sheets (MSDSs), and specific training on information on the use, application, and handling of the hazardous materials as well as the information contained on the material data safety sheet for each of those materials.

This sheet is by no means a complete listing of all of the components required under the statute and is meant to simply provide an awareness on the part of the employer that there are specific regulatory issues that need to be addressed regarding the use of hazardous materials in their workplace. The following 8 steps provide a beginning on which employers can establish programs that are specific to their operations.

- STEP 1:** Obtain a copy and read the Hazard Communication Regulation, Title 8, *California Code of Regulations*, Section 5194. A copy can be obtained from your CompWest Insurance Company's local office.
- STEP 2:** Designate staff responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the hazard communication program.
- STEP 3:** Develop and maintain a current inventory of **all** hazardous substances to which employees might be exposed.
- STEP 4:** Obtain the necessary MSDSs for all of your listed hazardous substances.
- STEP 5:** Check all original and secondary containers to ensure they are properly labeled. Include Proposition 65 warning requirements if applicable.
- STEP 6:** Develop a written plan for your program stating how it will be implemented.
- STEP 7:** Train your employees on the program, the materials and their hazards. Training should include at least the following:
1. What MSDSs are and how to interpret them.
  2. How the material can hurt them and it's routes of entry into the body.
  3. Proper use and handling procedures and control measures.
  4. Signs & symptoms of exposure.
  5. The personal protective equipment/protective measures needed.
  6. The first aid to be administered if the employee is exposed.
  7. Methods to detect the release of the material in the work area.
- STEP 8:** Keep your program current by initially training all new employees and retraining all employees when new hazardous substances are introduced into the workplace.

The quality of a hazard communication program is largely dependent upon the adequacy and accuracy of the hazard determination. Employers evaluating hazardous substances must be able to demonstrate that they have adequately evaluated the hazards in their operations. CompWest Insurance Company has a wide variety of resources and assistance available to its policyholders and agents on safety issues.